

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 10011

EO 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PINT, KS
SUBJECT: YI CHOL-SUNG REPORTS MOFA BRIEFING ON US/ROK RELATIONS
AND HIS OWN IMPRESSIONS TO EMBASSY

REF: A) SEOUL 9681, B) SEOUL 9884

SUMMARY. NDP'S YI CHOL-SONG PASSED ON TO US ESSENCE OF
FONMIN'S DECEMBER 16 BRIEFING TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOREIGN
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT OF US/ROK RELATIONS. BRIEFING
RELATED CURRENT STATE OF PLAY OF KIM SANG-KUN AFFAIR AND
MATTER OF ALLEGED BLUE HOUSE BUGGING BY US. YI PRIVATELY
INDICATED HIS WORRY THAT ROKG POSITION TOWARD DISSIDENTS
WAS HARDENING, PARTLY BECAUSE OF CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT BY
MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS AND RECENT SMALL DEMONSTRATION AT
SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. END SUMMARY

1. NDP SENIOR SUPREME COMMITTEEMAN YI CHOL-SUNG HAS
CONFIDED TO US ESSENCE OF INFORMAL, CLOSED-DOOR BRIEFING
GIVEN TO ASSEMBLY'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON
DECEMBER 16 BY FONMIN PAK TONG-CHIN. YI SAID THAT TWENTY
MINUTE SESSION COVERED CURRENT STATE OF PLAY BETWEEN ROKG
AND U.S. VIS-A-VIS PAK TONG-SON AFFAIR AND RELATED
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DEVELOPMENTS.

2. FONMIN ADMITTED THERE HAD BEEN PARTIAL DENIAL BY USG
ON ALLEGED BUGGING OF BLUE HOUSE BUT THAT ROKG WOULD NOT
BE SATISFIED UNTIL U.S. MAKES TOTAL AND PUBLIC DENIAL.
MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION KIM HAD ISSUED STATE-

MENT OF PROTEST THAT ROKG FELT U.S. HAD INFRINGED ON ROK SOVEREIGNTY. FONMIN ADDED THAT PRESIDENT HAD NEVER MET PAK TONG-SON PRIVATELY.

3. ACCORDING TO YI, FONMIN STATED THAT CONSIDERING EVERY ASPECT OF KIM SANG-SUN'S BACKGROUND AND PERSONALITY ETC., ROKG CANNOT BELIEVE HIS DEFECTION TO HAVE BEEN GENUINELY VOLUNTARY ONE. MINISTER PAK THEN REVIEWED OFFER OF USG TO MAKE KIM AVAILABLE FOR MEETING AT STATE DEPARTMENT WITH ROK EMBASSY OFFICIAL KU CHUNG-HOE, BUT SAID ROKG HAD REJECTED OFFER. ITS POSITION WAS THAT AMBASSADOR HAM HIMSELF SHOULD SEE KIM AT ROK EMBASSY.

4. FONMIN ALSO NOTED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD REAFFIRMED U.S. COMMITMENT TO ROKG THROUGH AMBASSADOR SNEIDER.

5. IN CONCLUSION, FONMIN SAID THAT BAN ON PRESS STORIES CONCERNING PAK TONG-SON AFFAIR AND KIM SANG-KUN "DEFECTION" IN ROK PRESS WAS DUE TO GOVERNMENT CONCERN THAT REPORTS MIGHT GENERATE ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT AMONG KOREAN PUBLIC.

6. YI SAID THAT NDP HAD CALLED FOR FORMAL SESSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO BE HELD DECEMBER 17 IN WHICH YI AND OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS COULD INTERPELLATE FONMIN. MEETING IS EXPECTED TO BE CLOSED TO PUBLIC. YI ALSO SAID HE HAS AVOIDED INVOLVEMENT IN ROK/US DISPUTE THUS FAR BUT FEELS HE SHOULD NOW PRESS MORE VIGOROUSLY FOR ROKG TO SHARE ITS INFORMATION.
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7. YI FURTHER INDICATED WORRY THAT ROKG HAS BEEN RECENTLY HARDENING ITS POSITION TOWARD DOMESTIC CRITICS, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF RECENT SMALL SNU DEMONSTRATION (REF A) AND STRONG STATEMENTS IN COURT BY KIM TAE-CHUNG AND MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS (REF B). UNTIL THESE STORIES BROKE, YI CLAIMED HE HAS IMPRESSION THAT ROKG WAS PREPARED TO RELAX ITS CONTROL A LITTLE AND HAD EVEN SUGGESTED TO KIM TAE-CHUNG THROUGH INTERMEDIARY THAT KIM REFRAIN FROM AGGRESSIVE STANCE AT TRIAL IN HOPE THAT YI MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONVINCE GOVT. TO FREE HIM.

8. IN PARTING COMMENT, NDP LEADER TOLD US HE WAS CONCERNED THAT PRESIDENT PAK IS SURROUNDED MORE AND MORE BY THOSE WHO DEMONSTRATE THEIR LOYALTY BY ONLY TELLING HIM PLEASING NEWS AND WHO WERE ADVISING HIM TO TAKE TOUGH LINE.
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